

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 0226

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MORG, PGOV, UY
SUBJ: NEW COMMANDERS IN CHIEF FOR URUGUAYAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE

REF: A) MONTEVIDEO 210 (NOTAL) (DTG 191101Z JAN 78),
B) DAO URUGUAY IR 69000178

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. GENERAL GREGORIO ALVAREZ OF THE URUGUAYAN ARMY AND BRIGADIER GENERAL RAUL BENDAHAN OF THE AIR FORCE WERE DESIGNATED COMMANDERS IN CHIEF OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SERVICES YESTERDAY AND ANNOUNCED TODAY, 19 JANUARY. THEY WERE ELECTED BY SECRET VOTE OF THE GENERAL OFFICERS OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE RESPECTIVELY. ALVAREZ WILL RELIEVE CURRENT CINC JULIO C. VADORA 1 FEBRUARY 78. BENDAHAN RELIEVES CINC DANTE PALADINI ON 23 JANUARY. BOTH ALVAREZ AND BENDAHAN AUTOMATICALLY ASCEND TO THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL. PALADINI AND VADORA ARE RETIRING.

2. ALSO ANNOUNCED WERE THE NEW PROMOTIONS OF TWO ARMY AND 1 AIR FORCE COLONELS TO GENERAL OFFICER. NEW ARMY GENERALS ARR HOLMES COITINO AND IVAN PAULOS. THE NEW AIR FORCE BRIGADIER IS MANUEL BUADAS.

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3. EMBASSY SUBMITTING DETAILED BIOGRAPHIC UPDATE ON ALVAREZ. ADDRESSEES SHOULD HAVE UP-TO-DATE BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON BENDAHAN. END UNCLASSIFIED

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT. THE ELECTIONS OF ALVAREZ AND BENDAHAN WERE EXPECTED. PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS THERE

WERE REPORTS AND RUMORS THAT ALVAREZ, WHO HAS ONLY A YEAR AS CINC BEFORE HE, TOO, MUST RETIRE (SEE REF DAO IR), MIGHT BE PASSED OVER IN FAVOR OF THE NEXT-RANKING GENERAL LUIS QUIEROLO, MILATT TO WASHINGTON. AS REPORTED REFTEL A, ALVAREZ WAS KNOWN TO BE OPPOSED BY THE GENERALS OF THE FAR RIGHT WHO FEAR THE CHANGES HE IS EXPECTED TO BRING, BUT THEY DID NOT HAVE THE VOTES TO STOP HIM. WE BELIEVE THAT THE TWO NEW CINCS ARE MODERATES WITH WHOM THIS EMBASSY CAN WORK TO IMPROVE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH OUR CONTACTS WITH BENDAHAN HAVE BEEN MORE EXTENSIVE AND DIRECT THAN THOSE WITH ALVAREZ.

5. A NOTEWORTHY AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF THE SUCCESSION OF CINCS IS THAT IT IS TAKING PLACE ACCORDING TO THE ESTABLISHED "RULES OF THE GAME." NONE OF THE THREE POST 1973 "SOFT GOLPE" CINCS HAS SOUGHT TO PERPETUATE HIMSELF OR TO DOMINATE. VICE ADMIRAL GONZALEZ STEPPED ASIDE AS NAVY CINC LAST MARCH UPON COMPLETION OF HIS 4 YEARS AS NAVY CINC. NOW VADORA AND PALADINI ARE RETIRING ON SCHEDULE. VADORA REPORTEDLY WILL BECOME AMBASSADOR TO PARAGUAY AND PALADINI WILL BE AMBASSADOR TO CHILE. PEZZULLO

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